

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Promoting Telehealth for Low-Income Consumers*, WC Docket No. 18-213.

I thank the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau for working so diligently and quickly to identify the first wave of the Connected Care Pilot Program participants for funding. As I consider the Commission's priorities for 2021, I am guided by the overwhelming evidence that low-income people are disproportionately shouldering the burden of the coronavirus crisis and the economic turmoil it has caused. That is why I am especially pleased that so many of the selected programs will serve a predominantly or exclusively low-income population. As excited as many of us are about the growing capabilities of telehealth services, we must recognize that those services are not available or practical for the tens of millions of Americans without adequate access to broadband. The need to expand access to telehealth—especially during a pandemic—makes connecting every American to affordable broadband even more urgent. I look forward to selecting more Pilot Program participants in the coming months and to our broader efforts to ensure low-income families share in all the benefits of broadband.